

of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:25 a.m., March 22, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 23.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Leaders of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq *March 22, 2007*

I just had a remarkable visit with some remarkable citizens. I want to thank them—Secretary Rice and Secretary England and other members of my administration—for being here to listen to State Department folks, USAID folks, and military folks talk about why they volunteered to go help Iraq succeed.

We have a remarkable country, and we have people from different walks of life, different levels of experience make the decision to serve America by helping a young democracy survive. They understand what I understand, and that is, success in Iraq is important for the security of the United States. And my first mission was to thank them and their families. The country owes you a debt of gratitude.

And the Congress owes you the money you need to do the job, without any strings attached. In the recent—in the bill that's now being debated, there is money to help you do your jobs, in that bill. And Congress needs to get that bill out as quickly as possible, without a lot of extra spending and without a lot of strings to it.

There is money in that bill to make sure our military is funded. And I believe it's important for our commanders on the ground to have the flexibility necessary to make deci-

sions to succeed. We don't want you to go into Iraq and then have unnecessary strings placed upon the money so you can't do your job. Congress needs to get their business done quickly, get the monies we requested funded, and let our folks on the ground do the job.

Secondly, Secretary Rice is headed to the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East is a priority for this administration. She's going to continue our efforts to involve all parties—the Palestinians, the Israelis, Arabs—to work for a solution that will lead to peace, and that is a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

I have been on the phone to some of my counterparts in the Middle East, reminding them that I have a strong commitment to this vision, as does the Secretary. This will be hard work. It's not easy to get all parties headed in the right direction, but it's necessary work for this country. And it's necessary for our Secretary of State, with my strong approval, to be moving the process forward. And that's what she'll be doing.

Madam Secretary, I wish you all the best on your trip, and I thank you very much for your service.

In the meantime, thank you all. Please give your families all the thanks in the world. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on House of Representatives Passage of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations *March 23, 2007*

Today I'm joined here at the White House by veterans, family members of people serving in combat, family members of those who have sacrificed. I am honored that they have joined me here today.

Here in Washington, members of both parties recognize that our most solemn responsibility is to support our troops in the war on terror. Yet today a narrow majority in the House of Representatives abdicated its responsibility by passing a war spending